

Amendments to the Abstract:

Please replace the original Abstract with the following new Abstract, which commences on a separate sheet.



Abstract

When global purchasing is to be performed, the majority of negotiations will be with firms with which there have been no past transactions. Thus, there is a need for a system that allows efficient purchasing of high-quality products. An inter-firm transaction mediation site is set up on the Internet. A quality calculation program is provided over a network to firms desiring transactions. The quality calculation program evaluates product quality in terms of "product specifications" and "production plant conditions," and a product quality evaluation estimate is made based on these evaluation results. As a result, firms desiring inter-firm transactions can calculate indices indicating quality of the item involved in the transaction as well as indices indicating the capability levels relating to quality achievement for the item involved in the transaction. These can be used as desired transaction conditions.